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*On behalf of the City and its residents, welcome to Woodstock*, a growing, vibrant community with strong commitments to long-held historic, cultural, educational, healthy-living, and healthy-environment values.

First established in 1844, our City was called Centerville, referencing its central location in McHenry County and the fact that it serves as the seat of our county government. In 1845, Centerville was renamed Woodstock and has celebrated significant recognition over the years, being named an *All America City* in 1964, a *Certified City* in 1987, a National Trust *Distinctive Destination* in 2007, and most recently, a *Preserve America Community*. The Woodstock Square is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and rests in the center of the City's Historic District. Pillars of the district include the historic Woodstock Opera House, theatrical home of renowned performers Orson Welles, Paul Newman, Betsy Palmer, Tom Bosley, Shelley Berman, Lois Nettleton and Geraldine Page, and the Old Courthouse, today's home of the Old Courthouse Arts Center. Surrounding the Square are a number of beautifully restored Victorian homes, many of which have been plaqued by the Historic Preservation Commission in recognition of their significance to the City's history and architectural diversity.

Woodstock is the centerpiece of the region's visual and performing arts community. Each year there are more than 500 performances at the Woodstock Opera House, including the highly acclaimed Woodstock Mozart Festival performed weekends in August. February 2<sup>nd</sup> marks Groundhog Day as the community waits for our own Woodstock Willie to make his prognostication. Wednesday nights during the months of June and July will find residents in the Park in the Square enjoying evening concerts performed by the Woodstock City Band, a tradition for 130 consecutive years! Tuesdays and Saturdays from May through October find the Farmers' Market, ranked number one in the State of Illinois and in the top ten nationwide for three years in a row, open for business. The Square is alive every weekend throughout the summer with arts and crafts shows, festivals, weddings, the annual Memorial Day Parade and welcome home celebrations for our returning service men and women. A day of shopping in Woodstock's unique and inviting stores recalls memories of scenes and personalities associated with the Dick Tracy cartoon. Chester Gould, creator and cartoonist of the famed police detective, lived in Woodstock and based many of his characters and stories on local events, buildings, and people. A walk around the downtown area also provides the opportunity to stop at many locations identified by plaques as the site of important scenes in the movie *Groundhog Day* filmed in Woodstock in 1992.

Regardless of the reason for visiting the City, a day in Woodstock is nicely topped off by an evening of dining at any of the City's many fine dining establishments. Square restaurants offer outdoor dining during the summer and cozy indoor fares in fall and winter. And, the Square in winter is simply not to be missed. Nothing is more spectacular than the traditional *Lighting of the Square* ceremony as trees and buildings become ablaze with light in preparation for the holidays. A winter evening is truly incomplete without a horse drawn carriage ride over the brick streets or a leisurely stroll under the magic of the winter lights.

Woodstock consistently demonstrates its commitment to quality education. Community Unit School District 200 offers two high schools two middle schools, six elementary schools, the Verda Dierzen Early Learning Center, and Clay Academy. Currently, 1,900 students in the District are enrolled in their award-winning dual language program, recognized by the Government of Spain as an *International Spanish Academy*, in which students receive instruction in all curricula in both English and Spanish. Additionally, Woodstock is home to St. Mary Catholic School and Marian Central Catholic High School. The community supports a state-of-the-art public library, complete with children's center, reading room, internet access and community room. Just a few short miles from McHenry County College, Woodstock offers easy access to traditional college courses, as well as numerous adult education classes. The City is also home to the Challenger Learning Center. Dedicated as a memorial to the crew of the ill-fated Challenger space flight, the Center provides science exploration and team building programs for youth and adults alike. The site also hosts the Woodstock Center of nationally known Aurora University, now offering an M.B.A. in Leadership, an M.S. in Nursing, and doctoral degrees in education with leadership emphasis in the areas of Adult and Higher Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Administration.

Our community also offers truly exceptional health care and senior living facilities. Centegra Hospital Woodstock has evolved from a small, hometown hospital established in Woodstock in 1914 to a leader in innovative medical treatment, including the Gavers Breast Cancer Center and a Hospice Inpatient Care Home. Mercy Woodstock Medical Center opened in 1999, offering health care services dedicated to broad-based healing. For over 125 years, Hearthstone Communities has provided quality senior living options and opportunities for senior citizens and their families with an emphasis on passionate, family-oriented senior care.

With nearly 550 acres of parkland and many more acres of open space, Woodstock demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining its individual character and identity within a larger growing region. Through partnerships with the McHenry County Conservation District, The Land Conservancy and the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, the City actively works to conserve and preserve precious natural resources. Thanks to the efforts of the Defenders and a strong collaboration with municipal and county governments, McHenry County was the first in the State of Illinois to mandate a curbside recycling program. Environmental protection is truly a way of life in Woodstock. And for those interested in sports and recreation, the City offers the Woodstock Water Works aquatic center; the Woodstock Recreation Center, with a full range of health and fitness equipment and programs; a 2.5 mile walking/running path in Emricson Park; and numerous soccer fields and ball diamonds throughout the City for both leagues and families to enjoy.

As our City motto states, Woodstock is "*True to its past and confident of its future.*" Whether visiting for a day, a weekend, or living in Woodstock, we're glad you're here. Welcome to our home!



Michael A. Turner  
Mayor